

November 2002. Discrimination while seeking employment

In the last week of November 2002 looking for a job I called to Apex, a known nursing and care services agency. The secretary asked for my address and phone number and sent me the application form. The application form mentioned that I have to prepare some papers like my Visa, 3 persons as references and the qualifications that I have got before, then I need to ring them to arrange a time for an interview. My interview was arranged for 2.00pm on the next Tuesday, (3 December 2002).

When I went to the office a lady asked me if I had brought my documents for taking some copies. I said 'yes' and presented them, my National Insurance Number, my photos, my different certificates which mention that I was a GP and had got a clinic. Also my certificates in English Language Courses. "Your passport?" she asked. "Here are my documents from the Home Office" I said. She paused over this document and I was thinking 'what is she going to say about it?'

She said 'although this document mentions that you have permission to indefinite leave to remain but because you have been less than 5 years in this country, and obviously we cannot contact with your embassy isn't it? I said 'yes' "so, we don't have enough criminal record about your past. This is what I'm saying, this is mentioned in our forms'. I said 'I have been for year and a half in the UK'. 'But it is not enough. You can also speak with my manager'. 'Is there any way that the problem can be solved?' 'I don't think so'.

She asked from her manager to come. She said some things more wonderful. 'This is the reason we don't recruit asylum seekers'. I said 'what about NHS because I know that some asylum seekers work there?' 'NHS acts like us about this subject and they sometimes employ our staff. We want to recruit you but we cannot do it'. I did my best to make a smile and said 'thank you' and I exited.

My feeling: I think I was not their first asylum applicant, also she said. But I wonder that they have not done something for this kind of applicant. So, her last sentence was meaning different to me, 'we want to recruit you but we don't want to see you'.

During the conversation I could not help myself to stop sweating, it made me more nervous. I had not had such an embarrassment if I would have killed a patient by mistake. Feeling of extreme contempt was unbelievable. After I came out from there different things attacked to my head. 'What if I want to work in an ASDA store because they need to make sure that I don't pick up their goods'. "So, why I am studying to re-qualify myself if I will have this problem with NHS"? 'I could not imagine one day someone wants to ask about my criminal record from a band of criminals (embassy of ***). 'It looks that I still have a long way to go.

Finally I chose my best solution, sleep. After I wake up I will feel better and I can think it was another nightmare.

R February 2003